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PARSON DASH





# PARSON DASH

OR

*A RAP AT RITUALISM  
IN HUDIBRASTIC VERSE*

BY

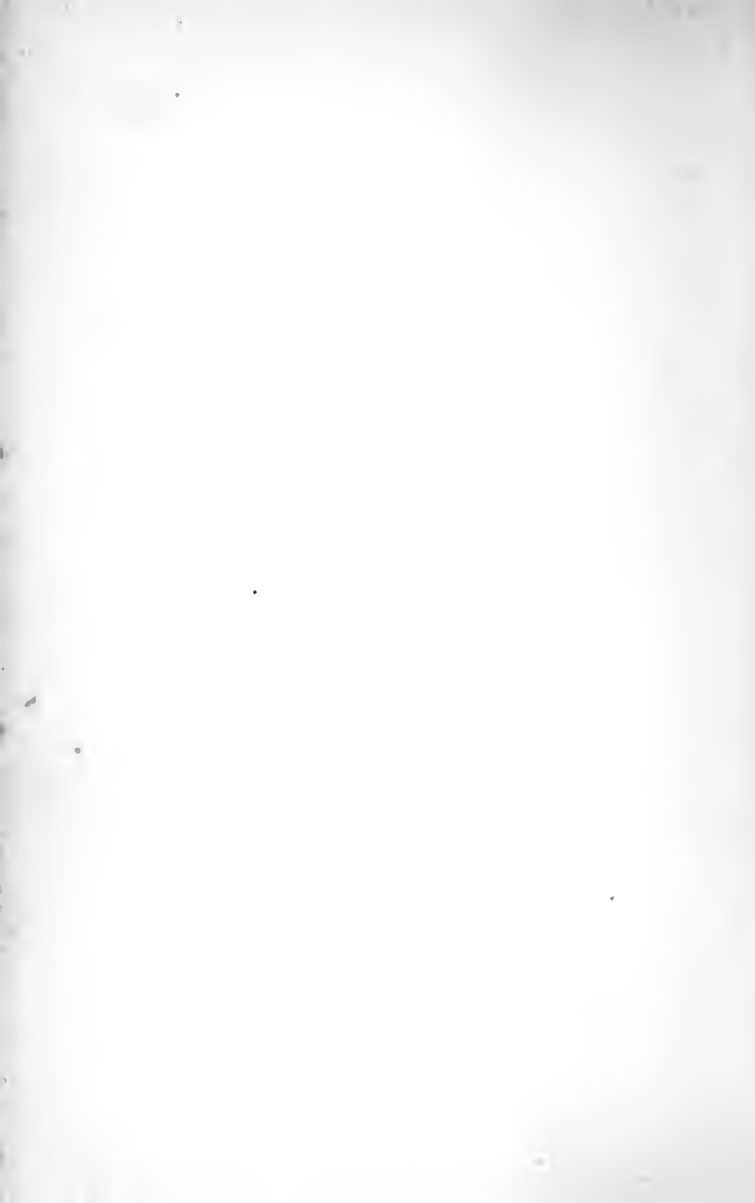
ERASMUS HOLIDAY



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# PARSON DASH



## PROEM

ALL ye, who, trained at school and college,  
Still ruminatè o'er classic knowledge,  
Recalling Ovid's dainty pages  
Of those accommodating ages,  
When god and goddess, youth and maid,  
Changed forms, betrayer or betrayed,  
Can tell—how Jove and beldam Juno  
(An ill-assorted couple, you know—)  
Fell out: she scolds, at once he flies,  
In mufti from Olympian skies,  
To milder mate by secret path :

(She cooks at home her boiling wrath.)

And now the king of gods and men

Turns to a bull, or now again

To snowy swan, or yet—behold !

Glistens, a dazzling shower of gold !

The gilded youngsters of the palace,

Inspired by love, inspired by malice,

Mars, Mercury, and bright Apollo

Put on their airy wings to follow,

And swift as falcon, hot as Etna,

Descending on our terrene Gretna,

In true hereditary way

With filial zest pursued their prey,

Gaining their naughty ends, unless

By some cursed metamorphosis,

The nymph, or naiad of their fancy

Turned to a laurel, or a pansy,

Or mocked their unrequited trouble

With sudden fountain's spray and bubble :

Thus Daphne, and thus Arethusa  
Made Phœbus, or Alpheus loser,  
Now, would you have still more examples,  
Dan Ovid offers scores of samples,  
And still his selfsame tale repeats  
With varied art and new conceits  
In his delightful book, which bears  
The stamp of twice a thousand years.

By way of introduction this—

I, too, a metamorphosis  
Present, but of another kind  
More suited to the modern mind,  
Unique, and in its way dramatic,  
Nor quite without the salt called "Attic."  
Enough, read on from line to line,  
Or to oblivion consign  
In the waste-paper basket deep  
Amid the miscellaneous heap :  
But, if you read, read to the end,

And let good humour still attend ;  
Then weep, or please you laugh, all told,  
As when the augurs met of old,  
And with Horatian wit determine  
Which cuts the deeper, jest, or sermon.



# PART I

## I

### THE MAN

THERE lived, in days not long gone by,  
A parson with a lively eye,  
His frame both vigorous and tall,  
The head for such a bulk was small,  
Stout were his legs, breast broad and strong,  
Arms swinging as he stalked along :  
His face, though rubicund, was clear,  
He'd reached his four and twentieth year,  
Sloped backward both his brow and chin—  
(Some faces end as they begin).  
His nose described, both long and fine,  
The curvilinear aquiline,

His nether lip did seem to start,  
And from its fellow hung apart,  
So that his open mouth might show  
His perfect teeth, as white as snow ;  
Full thickly grew his tufted hair,  
His whiskers were a bell-pull pair ;  
Keen was his temperament, and he  
Oft spoke perhaps too volubly,  
So that, if on occasion fluttered,  
His words went galloping, once uttered,  
And headlong tripped each other up,  
As pup will tumble over pup.  
Sundays beheld him quite the clerk,  
In whitest tie and raiment dark,  
But on a weekday rural quite  
Knee-breeched he strode in gaiters tight,  
Wore cut-a-way like me or you,  
And round his neck the bird's-eye blue.  
Now gait, face, speech, you have the man—  
Call him “ our hero,” if you can.

Meanwhile 'tis good to add his name,  
Not such, as Shandy's self could blame,  
Hard hit, when "Trismegistus" sank  
To a mere "Tristram," bald and blank.  
Our parson took his sire's with cash,  
Augustus Dionysius Dash !

## II

## LOCAL HABITATION

AT Turniptop in Turnipshire  
Dash trod the footsteps of his sire,  
For, when the good old man was dead,  
Squire Double, lord of all things, said—  
" A very chip of the old block,  
" Give me another of the stock ;  
" Only to Dash a Dash succeeds,  
" The young un knows our thoughts and needs,  
" We're country folk, and country-bred,  
" No scholars, but sound heart and head,

“ Young Dash too’s country-bred, our own,  
“ Our very blood, our very bone,  
“ Let others Puseyite Punches list,  
“ The mountebanks ! ”—he shook his fist—  
“ Or thump, and sweat, and roar, and rant,  
“ And evangelically cant,  
“ But, orthodox in prayer and praise,  
“ We’ll keep our old time-honoured ways,  
“ While Dash steers straight, and Double rules,  
“ No Solons maybe, but no fools.”

Sexton and clerk clapped loud applause,  
His will was theirs, his words were laws ;  
So followed the established thing,  
“ The king is dead, God save the king.”  
Squire Double chuckled as he heard,  
And Dash was to his cure preferred ;  
What could he do, a fledgling priest,  
But stammer gratitude at least ?  
Next act, as new incumbent ought,  
Archidiaconally taught,

Toll bell, read lessons, be installed,  
A rector popularly called,  
Moved by the spirit, too, let's hope,  
To save the souls of Turniptop?  
A rural patriot, too, in truth  
Dash loved the parish from his youth,  
There trees he'd climbed, a careless boy,  
There first gun, saddle served for toy,  
There first he'd followed fox and hare,  
And knocked his bird down clean and fair.  
Then, too, the rectory was snug,  
With a nice income towed in tug,  
Some clear nine hundred pounds a year  
Without a drawback anywhere,  
Light work, no curate needed, he  
Could everything do easily,  
No flock more healthy to be seen  
Of old or young on village green :  
Garden and glebe, too, kept the pot  
Boiling, in sooth, a goodly lot.

## III

## SQUIRE AND PARSON

Now squire and parson chummed together,  
As birds consort of the same feather ;  
They were not wholly rustic either,  
Though born, you'd swear, to live and die there,  
To hunt, and shoot, and fell, and lop  
The thickset trees of Turniptop ;  
For, in their salad days and green,  
Had not each, as young Shallow, been  
To glorious old Oxford once,  
Nor scholar quite, yet far from dunce ?  
And could not either to his name  
Subscribe M.A. ? but what is fame ?  
Now, too, as they hobnobbed together,  
Discussing walnuts, wine, and weather,  
Though different their ages, still  
They'd cap each other with good will,  
And, if Greek from their heads was out

(Not much was ever in, I doubt)  
Certes, you'd hear them fondly quote  
Without a reference or note  
From Virgil, or rotundo ore  
From Horace, glib and con amore,  
First—"timeo Danaos"—frequent text,  
Then—"Rusticus expectat"—next,  
Or Ovid's "middle course is best,"—  
Whence you may gather all the rest,  
And save some trouble to the bard,  
For, quote or translate, still 'tis hard  
To pack all samples tight and neat  
In brief octosyllabic feet.  
Travels and novels they would read,  
Mostly by authors old and dead,  
And answered, if you asked them "why?"  
With an uncompromising eye :  
"Why, Sir, they'd more of human nature,  
"Men of a much superior stature;  
"Ah! there were giants in those days,

“Dwarfs now themselves on others raise,  
“Mere pinchbeck, imitation, shoddy,  
“Novels are spun by every noddie ;  
“Where’s Fielding, or where’s Smollett now ?  
“Instead from some rare milking cow  
“They fill the literary pails,  
“One plot subserving varied tales.”  
Though, as to Shandy’s meaning dim,  
They rather liked dear Corporal Trim,  
And kindled over Uncle Toby,  
But to Sterne else they gave the go-by :  
Sam Weller, Pecksniff made them laugh,  
For Dickens was not bad by half,  
Though seldom they were seen to smile  
O’er Thackeray’s subsarcastic style ;  
Gay frolic Lever never bored,  
And Marryat—they fairly roared.  
But for a splitting novel—zounds !  
Naught was like Facey Romford’s hounds !  
And “Mr Sponge’s sporting tour”



For dulness was a perfect cure.  
They liked not female authors much,  
“Miss Austen too minute and Dutch.”  
But Mrs Trollope now was worth  
Whole libraries of later birth,  
And Radcliffe, let them once begin,  
Detained with a down dropping chin  
In poets they were little versed,  
But always reckoned Pope the first,  
And knew a tag or two indeed  
From Dryden, Johnson too, at need ;  
Shakespeare and Milton they allowed,  
Were men to make a nation proud,  
And held them of uncommon worth  
Almost too wonderful for earth :  
All others in one class they viewed  
“Stars of inferior magnitude ;”  
Little of lesser fry they read,  
And at most moderns shook the head.  
Let next be chronicled in rhyme,

How otherwise they passed their time :  
Friend Double now, though growing old,  
Was yet on horseback keen and bold,  
Still loved to knock his partridge o'er,  
And storm at those who rode before—  
That is—before the hounds, I mean—  
Calling them “marsports” in his spleen,  
“Mere Cockneys, Sir, John Gilpin bred,  
“Scarce knowing horse's tail from head.”  
But Dash, full well he followed suit,  
As keen of purpose as Mark Brute,  
For “quidquid vult, id valde vult,”  
His aim once settled, he'd exult.  
No better horseman in the shire,  
So light his touch, so full of fire,  
Knew when to drive his steed, or spare  
Pursuing Reynard, or the hare,  
And first and foremost on the day,  
Cried “tally-ho” and “harkaway.”  
His groom approvingly would nod,

“Ands, ands, they is the gift of God,

“A boy may learn to get a seat,

“But—see such ands—it is a treat!”

No firmer footsteps tramped the stubble  
Than those of Dash and those of Double;  
None with such judgment rare and ripe  
Extinguished the meandering snipe:

It is an art; while some too late

Just miss the mark, and damn their fate,

Another with his timely guess

Achieves exemplary success.

Now, by the hearth as snug and close,

Before their after-dinner's doze,

With wits the brighter and the clearer

For comet port and old Madeira,

How glibly do their lips repeat

Each t'other's admirable feat:

And first “your nerve, Sir, never fails,

“How well you took that ditch and rails,

“Firm, as a very Centaur, you,

“And rarely Bantam answered too.”

Double thus much, then Dash would say  
(After perchance a shooting day,)

“How keen your glance, what steady aim,

“Still always down upon the game,

“That hare was running fast away,

“But pounce, old boy, you made him stay !

“Dim, too, the light, and long the shot,

“Yet, squire, by Jove you made it hot.

“Egad, you have both hand and eye,

“Who praises both need never lie.”

The setters, half asleep and snug,

Don, Prince, stretched out upon the rug,

Just wagged their tails, as if to say,

“Agreed,” and then supinely lay.

Thus between merry talk and laugh

A glass or two of wine they'd quaff,

But neither did they tope, or booze,

Gentlemen both, and not Yahoos.

Then to the billiard room they'd stray,

And chase the wintry night away,  
Playing the game, or pyramids,  
Till drowsy sleep half closed their lids.  
Or, if a pair of neighbours strolled  
Up to the court, then all was gold,  
The table set, they never missed  
The versatility of whist,  
Like Egypt's queen, ne'er known to fail,  
"Age cannot wither, custom stale  
Its infinite variety :"  
Yea, Talleyrand, or better die.  
But, if nor cards, nor yet the cue  
Killed time, still to each other true  
They'd stretch their legs before the hearth,  
And make a milder mutual mirth :  
Pleased them backgammon's various lots,  
And capturing each other's blots ;  
With hearty hand they shook the dice,  
Chuckling o'er each well-known device,  
Then, after just a nightcap cup,

To bed, keen for the morn, went up.

So sped their wintry nights along,  
But summer's was a different song,  
Then on bright evenings they would stroll  
To farm or paddock, "taking toll"—  
So said the squire, of what went on,  
What done amiss, or left undone,  
Or to the kennels they'd repair,  
Pat the old hounds, o'er the puppies stare,  
Or, taking now his turn at cricket,  
Dash drove the ball, or kept the wicket,  
While cheery Double looking on  
Clapped hands, and cried, "bravo ! my son."

Their politics I may not pass :  
No Tories they, bovine and crass,  
You'd fancy with their pipes and port  
They had been such of fossil sort :  
Not they—they followed pattern Whigs  
In that fine shire of swedes and pigs,  
Where once pacific Walpole roved,

When from St Stephen's din removed :  
Did not that shire, too, breed the Windham,  
Burke's pupil, nor so far behind him ?  
A man of metaphysic mind,  
Whose other tastes were less refined,  
A skilful fencer in debate,  
But, when it came to hitting straight,  
" A pugilist, Sir, every inch,  
" Who took, and gave, without a flinch."  
Cock-fighting, too, was then in vogue,  
And—" well he fought his mains, the rogue !"  
These were their country gods, and they  
Maintained the old time-honoured way,  
Which bowled the papist Stuart out,  
And throned Dutch William, who can doubt ?  
More Tory than the Tories thus,  
Ease-loving, and detesting fuss,  
Good honest Whigs, they chuckled both,  
And acquiesced in Melbourne's sloth,  
" *Quieta non movere*," still

Their motto, "change is mostly ill."  
The constitution they with awe  
Observed, and every statute law,  
And thought, and often said apart,  
Tories were Jacobites at heart,  
Who worshipped time's old cast-off things,  
Such as the right divine of kings,  
And pitied Sibthorp, Inglis pitied,  
As old anachronisms outwitted.

On summary jurisdiction bent  
To court (both were J. P.) they went,  
Fined drunkards, and put poaching down,  
Severe with Rhadamanthine frown,  
Sound law to staring clowns rehearsed  
When they'd their clerk consulted first.  
Anon more pleasantly they'd chat  
With country folk on this and that,  
And at the agricultural show  
Adjudge the prize for horse and cow,  
Hang the new shilling, splendid badge,



On honest breasts of Hodge and Madge,  
For had they not known how to rear  
Twelve children well in godly fear?  
Which, said some wag jocosely, meant  
To parson's and to squire's content.  
At morris-dances on the green  
Full oft their welcome forms were seen ;  
Christmas they never let pass by  
Without the waits and mummary ;  
A queen for may-day must be found,  
The pole by rustic feet danced round,  
And every sport, and every game  
In annual turn revolve the same.

So smooth the wheels of life rolled there,  
With such a sound harmonious pair,  
And, as the toilsome rustics died,  
Youngsters as leal their place supplied.

## IV

## THEOLOGIAN AND PARISH PRIEST

No pair in all the country round  
Certes more orthodox and sound,  
They seemed, as bubble chases bubble,  
To glide along each other's double,  
And, as in all things else agreed,  
One, too, in service, rites, and creed.  
No ruptures ever chafed the squire,  
"Of all men, Dash, I most admire,"  
Such were his words, oft adding "he  
"Has never contradicted me,  
"Just what his father was before him,  
"God rest him well"—(he drained his jorum)  
"Yes, as the sire, such, too, the son,  
"True may such blood for ever run,  
"A proper parson, squarely built,  
"And Protestant, Sir, to the hilt!  
"Though all the world should round him crash,

“I’d vouch he’d never falter, Dash,  
“But keep the tenor of his way,  
“Something like that in Flaccus, eh!”  
A pair so honest who could libel  
With their plain text and open bible?  
No casuists they in verbal fence  
To utter words of double sense,  
As they’d been told, so too they’d tell  
That heaven was heaven, hell was hell,  
Plain as a milestone all things were  
As sun above, and earth, and air,  
And firmest faith could never fail  
In minds, clear as their amber ale;  
Let theologians discuss  
Deep prolix themes, they hated fuss,  
Who would hairs metaphysic split,  
Thin jargon all and idle wit;  
Chaotic communists, red rads  
Propound their execrable fads,  
Such thunder never spoilt a crop,

Nor soured the milk of Turniptop.

Such was the rule of Dash and Double,  
The parish such without a trouble,  
And still serenely sped the life  
Of parson, and the parson's wife,  
A buxom dame with open hand  
Ready at duty's post to stand,  
Now smoothing some poor grandam's brow,  
Some childing mother aiding now  
With jelly, wine, with flannel, camlet,  
Feeding and clothing half the hamlet ;  
A good Samaritan indeed  
With sympathy for every need,  
And with her, mitigating pain,  
Love's angels, went her daughters twain,  
When tend'rest is the virgin mood  
Of youth that grows to womanhood.  
Nor was the parson, let me say,  
Less equal to his post than they :  
If not profoundly learned, he

Had skimmed thy cream, theology,  
And, if not thoroughly at home  
In this or that perplexing tome,  
He knew, as when he led the hunt,  
Safe landmarks pointing to the front,  
And, certain what he said was true,  
“Keep straight,” exclaimed, “or else you’ll  
rue.”

On Wheatly and on Pearson he  
Relied, and most implicitly,  
Butler, and Paley too, he’d back,  
Though they were harder nuts to crack,  
And called them oft “those granite rocks,  
“The great twin brothers orthodox ;”  
Jewel’s apology indeed  
He very little cared to read,  
And thought it for the church unwise  
Her bishops should apologise ;  
“Burnet was very sound,” he said,  
And Hall, and Horne he duly read ;

At Warburton he'd "pshaw!" and "pish!"

"Too multifarious a dish,

"Abusing too most other men

"With that vituperative pen."

Sermons of Tillotson he knew

Almost by heart, and preached them too,

Or quoted, when one year in four

His bishop made confirming tour;

Of Hooker he had heard, but ah!

Preferred the one that ends in kah,

And often said (he loved his joke).

"How controversies end in smoke,"

Watching the circling eddies play

Upwards on their aerial way.

His sermons seemed too long at first

Ere well he was in preaching versed,

And, misty somewhat and perplexed,

He sailed, and sailed about his text,

Making no headway, marking time,

(Here's metaphor mixed up in rhyme

Of land and sea, choose of the pair,  
Thus now and then hare crosses hare).  
Anon his ramblings he corrected  
With briefer discourse more connected,  
Finding ten minutes well could say  
What twenty more might wash away.  
Sometimes with big portentous word  
He scared the yokels as they heard,  
Save Rabshakeh, that devil's limb,  
(What smallest hamlet knows not him ? )  
Who mocked the rector's thunderbolt,  
Always there's some one in revolt.  
The changing fashions of the town  
He never liked, and preached in gown :  
He soared not o'er the people's head,  
And practised mostly what he said.  
The service never was too long,  
The psalms were no part of the song,  
Still Tate and Brady held their own,  
At Turniptop sole hymnal known ;

“Echoes at least of David’s lyre,  
“Not modern singsong,” said the squire,  
“New hymns seem mostly to my mind  
A mawkish, or presumptuous kind,”  
By noon the service ended quite ;  
Dash knew that by a Sunday right  
The village liked its dinner hot,  
And ne’er delayed the boiling pot,  
Save when he duly did not swerve  
Great days, as ordered to observe,  
For still the Church did fast, and feast her,  
And Lent was Lent, and Easter Easter :  
So round the old worm-eaten table  
Most met, as well as they were able,  
Four times a year at least in tryst  
To share the bread and wine of Christ :  
Duly the rector did invite  
His flock to that memorial rite,  
And called it (no note of dissent)  
‘Communion,’ or “the Sacrament” ;



For "celebration" was a word  
His congregation never heard,  
Met to partake the solemn feast,  
Not merely glorify the priest.

Thus quietly the years went on  
Traditional from sire to son,  
And "sartin sure"—cried all—"our friend  
"Our Rector's ours until the end,  
"And when at last he come to die,  
"Us by 'ur will to doomsday lie."

---

Such was the man I've sought to limn,  
Whose praises yet the yokels hymn,  
And laud the times, nor landing stop  
When Double ruled o'er Turniptop,  
And, priest and prophet both, 'twould seem  
Dash after Double ruled supreme.  
Now, if you do not know the man,

Paint him distincter, if you can :  
Certes I knew him in the flesh,  
When we were young, and life was fresh,  
And loved him, as I ever do  
Those to themselves and others true :  
Full soon he found his proper place,  
And looked life steady in the face,  
Saw all things darkest at their best,  
And did whate'er he did with zest.  
This only final trait I add,  
Once started, off he went like mad :  
Laughed Double—"Dash but needs the pro-  
logue,  
"Hold hard, or soon he'll go the whole hog."  
A simple character sincere,  
Who liked his pipe, who liked his beer,  
Who prayed and preached, a sound divine,  
Yet drank a social glass of wine,  
Married, baptized, bent o'er the dead  
With tender tones and drooping head,

Perused his bible, loved his Queen,  
Played whist, but not like Verdant Green,  
With five trumps never felt aground,  
Nor always trumped the third time round,  
If his were second player's turn—  
(Tyro, this self-denial learn !)  
And skilful both with gun and rod  
Fished, shot, said grace, believed in God,  
Whose weekdays came, whose weekdays went  
According to his native bent.  
To sum up all, both life and creed  
Were true and straight ; he held indeed  
With simple solemn Dogberry  
That God was a good man, a very.  
Call you his life a humdrum page ?  
No Stoic yet was half so sage,  
And, if e'er middle life he'd died,  
Sure none his "vixit" had denied,  
While Turniptop in him had trust  
Averse to riot as to rust.

## INTERLUDE

As in a novel or a play,  
Imagine now time rolled away,  
Some score of years at least, or more,  
With changes great and small galore.  
O for a philosophic nous !  
I could be nobly tedious,  
Discoursing grave on change and chance,  
Time, shifting scenes, and circumstance,  
Or might I be inspired, a bard,  
Frenzied with epic rage. " Hold hard ! "  
Exclaims the muse about to strike,  
" This stilted talk I much mislike,  
" From heights so rarified refrain,  
" Not yours the mountain, but the plain."

“The mild domestic style be yours,  
“That jogs along, but never bores,  
“And passing notes in homely rhyme  
“Fashions and fancies of the time.”  
“Well, well, you call a spade a spade,  
“But I can’t do without your aid ;  
“So must I be a humbler man,  
“Farewell encyclopædic plan,  
“Fine frenzies, and the rolling eye  
“From sky to earth, and earth to sky,  
“Farewell a world of wondrous things,  
“If but my Pegasus had wings,  
“Vast visions, sweeping thoughts profound,  
“Which might have made me laurel-crowned ;  
“And back at once without a murmur  
“To plainer paths and terra firma ;  
“Poets there are all else to handle,  
“To whom I cannot hold a candle ;  
“‘The Oracle’ can always find  
“One every fortnight to its mind.

"Then good my muse, let us pursue

" One steady purpose kept in view,

" And, passing to the second act,

" The transformation scene enact,

" Unfolding (friends, foes, clap or hiss)

" Our modern metamorphosis."

## PART II

### I

#### PLUTOCAPNOPOLIS

A POPULOUS big place there is,  
Call it Plutocapnopolis,  
Greek, but for meaning should they tax one,  
Smoke-wealth-town then in Anglo-saxon :  
For, if you'd grant me speak my mind,  
There's nothing like a name I find,  
And long Greek compounds most I love  
To give the advertising shove ;  
So the top's reached, then woe betide  
Lest down it topple t'other side !  
Hence many patentees have found  
Their fond inventions gaining ground

By cunning titles opportune,  
As roses bloom their best in June :  
Hence " Antigropeloes " were known,  
" Eureka " shirts, too, held their own,  
Till some preferred " Anuphaton,"  
But that was Greek by Greek outdone:  
Last vegetarians greet the eye  
With strident " akreophagy ;"  
I've spelt it, but by hook or crook,  
Fine text for round-hand copybook.  
Digressive this—let me refrain,  
Who will peruse this rambling strain ?  
Return we to that human hive,  
Where roundly half a million strive  
To get their part of more or less  
With hum and buzz in this world's mess  
A city polyglott, where speak  
Not Briton sole, but German, Greek,  
And who, in old world or in new,  
Ever escaped the wandering Jew ?



Haply a Parsee, too, you'd find,  
But this is not a guide-book, mind.  
And verily in vain I try  
To paint a city to the eye ;  
'Tis not my cue, maybe you've seen  
I much prefer the village green ;  
Besides our story needs no padding,  
Rather contracting, too, than adding,  
And then, howe'er seductive they,  
I dare not long in bypaths stray,  
But steadily the theme pursue,  
"Arma virumque" full in view.

Imagine then the swarming place  
Extended over miles of space,  
And, as you see from train, or bus,  
Out-reaching, like an octopus,  
To country lanes, north, south, east, west,  
Enveloped in the smoky pest ;  
Streets, squares, imagine, alleys, courts,  
Vast edifices of all sorts

For politics and civic strife,  
All the vicissitudes of life,  
Mart, and exchange ; nay—prythee, stop  
To gaze at Smugnew's picture shop ;  
They'll also show a thing or two  
In bric-a-brac and ormolu.  
Cathedral, churches, chapels, see  
Models of nonconformity  
For every sect beneath the sun,  
But of them all needs now but one :  
Lo ! here the suburb, church, and shrine,  
“Immaculate Conception,” thine !

## II

## GREETINGS

“WHAT ! country cousins met again ?  
“You came by the excursion train !  
“’Tis wonderful, but after all  
“East meets west round our little ball,  
“And nowadays few stop at home,

" But more or less globe-trotting roam ;  
 " Soon the old landmarks will, I fear,  
 " 'Twixt town and country disappear,  
 " Then race and race, and man and man  
 " Grow still more cosmopolitan ;  
 " Next science in electric ships  
 " Will make antipodean trips ;  
 " A trifle this, for we shall book  
 " Our passages with Mr Cook,  
 " First to the moon, importing there  
 " Our provender, gas, water, air,  
 " Then wafted on in light balloon  
 " Breakfast *en route*, and lunch at noon  
 " In sunny Venus ; then ho cars !  
 " Take tea on the canals in Mars ;  
 " In Mercury arrive to sleep,  
 " Packed in a hyperborean heap  
 " Of ice, with warrant not to melt,  
 " For that's indeed your torrid belt ;  
 " But deuce take heat, and deuce take cold,

“Science arranges all, I’m told,  
“Nor dread too fast, nor if too slow  
“The pace, for Gaffer Cook will know,  
“And bring all safely back unshipped,  
“Coupons collected, tickets clipped.  
“But this, a mere novitiate jaunt,  
“Our proud posterity shall flaunt,  
“What time the youngsters blithe and gay  
“Coast in and out the milky way,  
“Or through the interstellar voids  
“Toboggan down the asteroids,  
“Or, where far Neptune sulks in solo,  
“Contend at golf, contend at polo.  
“But still what brings you here? don’t talk  
“Together, this ear’s deaf as chalk,  
“Since influenza’s grip and ache  
“Gave me last March that cruel shake.”

At once the sisters both replied,  
And clustered on his hearing side,  
“Cousin, you always are so droll,”

Commencing then their news outroll :  
But what the dear chits would have told,  
How, not the Turniptop of old,  
With a new rector, a new race,  
The village was an alien place,  
This, and the details all must wait,  
For suddenly goes creak the gate,  
The gate, had metre granted, which  
Should have been hyphened to a lych.

## III

## TRANSFORMATION

ON head biretta, pipe in mouth,  
With beer at hand to slake his drouth,  
A parson of a different ticket  
From him we knew stands at the wicket,  
With fondling eyes that seem to search  
All o'er his terra-cotta church,  
And church on him in turn, and tower  
Seem to respond with solemn power,

And say, "in spite of pipe and liquor,  
You are our most transcendent Vicar."  
Lo ! what ecclesiastic taste !  
What cassock circles what a waist !  
From his broad breast a cross outshines,  
A relic from his neck declines,  
He wears his waistcoat very high  
Of M.B. pattern, then a tie  
Supports his throttle stiff and stark,  
So gagged, no dog could ever bark ;  
With cheek and chin close-shaven both,  
And yet, and yet, upon my oath,  
I surely seem to know that face,  
Nor yet exactly to retrace :  
He lifts biretta from his head,  
Few hairs, bald tonsure there instead ;  
Pray—whose is that receding brow ?  
That sloping chin, not first seen now ?  
A man past forty, and scarce fifty—  
(The face begins then to look shifty,

Nor tells its years out clear and plain,  
As youth does, age will do again.)  
A long-limbed man of proper height,  
He haunts me, a familiar sight,  
Yet unfamiliar and strange,  
Like one that's undergone a change ;  
But hark ! pale, lean, his curate near  
Approaches ; oh ! 'tis he, but hear  
That voice ! those tones ! it must be he.  
I'm wrapt as in an ecstasy,  
I know him—oh ! I know him still,  
If my detective mind has skill,  
Lo ! memory focussed in a flash,  
Augustus Dionysius Dash !

---

Naught but the unexpected happens,  
Be't Rontgen rays, or spirit rappings :  
How came it all to pass indeed,  
And new Dash to the old succeed ?

Don't ask me on the spur, I pray,  
To solve such an eventful day,  
I'm stunned as by electric shock,  
My tottering knees together knock,  
My eyes with fixed amazement stare  
At yonder parson's mien and air.  
O, transformation quaint and odd !  
Sure here's the knot that needs the god,  
A chorus anyhow should hint  
Its ambidextrous views in print,  
But since nor god, nor chorus solves,  
And all the crux on me devolves,  
Why best it seems, and, if you please,  
To hurry straight in medias res,  
Narrate the facts, then in their place  
The why and wherefore of the case.  
If parlous queer you deem the thing,  
Well—queerer still are happening,  
As when time-honoured faith is shaken,  
And Shakespeare quite submerged in Bacon ;



But for myself I nurse a doubt,  
Mayhap 'twas other way about,  
That Shakespeare wrote the "De Augmentis"  
And "Novum organum" my bent is.

## IV

## IN EXCELSIS

"THE child is father of the man."  
And most end much as they began,  
Our parson, too, is not unlike  
Himself, but himself on a bike,  
Or, if you choose, on stilts we'll say,  
Or prancing steed that's run away,  
Or like a skater on the rinks  
Cutting ecclesiastic jinks :  
Our Dash was ever to the front,  
Foremost at cricket, in the hunt,  
Nor rides he now less fast and sure  
Translated from his native cure,

While fondly all behind him go  
As when, hare spied, he called "Soho!"  
"Cribbed, cabined, and confined" no more,  
He's found his wings, he's learned to soar,  
And, far from Turniptop and clown,  
Indoctrinates the yeasty town.  
Dash has a terra-cotta church,  
Where he is Pope on his own perch,  
Pope with a p that's written small,  
But better so than none at all,  
For—ruat cœlum, earth may crash,  
But prophet, priest, and king is Dash:  
Maybe, like Gilpin, at his start  
He scarcely realised the part,  
But surely now he'll run his rig  
In chasuble, cope, stole, full fig!  
His church of terra-cotta stuff  
Is worth whole magazines of puff,  
So rare the fabric, airy light,  
With tower of just a perfect height,

Proportions in and out so true,  
And then its warm and ruddy hue,  
What mullions down each windowed aisle  
In florid or flamboyant style !  
O, what a tympanum ! how deep  
That porch, how well the arches sweep !  
And see recessed how true each one  
Concentric semi-circles run !  
Nor on the East is any lapse,  
Nave, choir, conclude in such an apse !  
Lastly just note and at your ease  
Crockets and finials, how they please !  
Thus, sated your admiring eye,  
“ A work of Christian art ” you cry,  
And wonder how the carper can  
Sneer “ gewgaw, toy, too spick and span,”  
But argument needs not to waste,  
There’s no contenting every taste.  
Now terra-cotta church indeed  
Demands a terra-cotta creed,

All things must be done á la mode,  
Such debt to such a church is owed,  
No compromise of half and half,  
One church, one ritual, one staff!  
“Hail simple children of the shire!  
“Come country cousins and admire;  
“From Turniptop ye’ve wandered far  
“In every sense, but here ye are;  
“Mayhap, intent on pleasant jaunt,  
“Ere farewell kiss you gave dear aunt,  
“Little ye thought of meeting me,  
“And what we’ve all gone out to see;  
“But here we are before the door  
“Of Dash’s church, our Dash no more,  
“And, by coincidence how strange,  
“Co-witnessing his wondrous change;  
“Hark, now! what’s all the noise and din?  
“A baldacchino’s going in!  
“A baldacchino! pray—what’s that?  
“I scarce can answer straight and pat;

“The Chancellor of the Diocese  
“Might better tell you at his ease,  
“He can let in, or tumble out  
“This thing, or that, of which there’s doubt :  
“Such power, called ‘faculty’ in law,  
“Grants, interdicts, obeyed with awe.  
“You note the queer-named thing, like head  
“Cut off of a four-poster bed,  
“A canopy, beneath unseen,  
“Curtained might lie a king or queen,  
“Or higher still some saintly brother,  
“Nay e’en the holy virgin mother !  
“The thing is novel in our churches,  
“Beware ! lud—how it sways and lurches !  
“Ho ! safe at last they’ve stowed it in  
“Mid jubilant exulting din !  
“But what’s this poster at the door  
“That greets our gaze ? pore on it, pore :  
“An octave ! that’s a solemn feast,  
“Which must extend eight days at least,

"At Christmas these high-churchmen hold

"At Easter too ; but that's all old :

"Now patron saints' recurring days

"Obtain this glut of prayer and praise,

"And here to-day they celebrate

"The mother maid immaculate :

"Yea, even now, they do begin"—

"Quick, Jonathan, let's enter in."

"With all my heart ; as yet you've seen

"Scarcely, fresh from your country green,

"The outside of the cup and platter,

"Now for the kernel of the matter.

"Soft, this side I, and that side you,

"Not all together in one pew,

"For see that here they duly pen

"The women, duly there the men."

He ceased, and in the hush they sat

Bewildered much by this and that,

With a few minutes to admire,

Ere yet the organ opens fire,

And their observant eyes to fix  
On yon high altar, candles, pyx ;  
Next note they with inquiring itch  
Mary's, the holy mother's niche ;  
Yes, there in sovereign state they see  
Immaculate virginity,  
Decked out in all her octave plight  
With every loveliest bloom of white,  
O'er which the splendid arums tower  
Surpassing every Lenten flower :  
Then on the pillars and the walls  
Behold what Rome " the stations " calls,  
Pictures of passion week, the coil  
Of the long crowd, and Jesus' toil,  
As up to Calvary he went,  
Bearing his burden, bowed and bent ;  
There too the image of his face,  
Vouchsafed by miracle and grace  
To her who wiped his burning brow  
With tender kerchief, wearing now,

For evermore by right divine,  
The portrait of his looks benign :  
There may they trace with vision keen  
The details of each moving scene  
From first to last, and weep, or soar,  
As now they sorrow, now adore.  
Next (O, how rare and richly dight)  
On rood-screen, reredos falls their sight,  
With crucifixes here and there,  
But crosses, crosses, everywhere ;  
Their eyes then on the pulpit linger,  
(But country coz don't point the finger).  
What more ? the windows tell their story  
In dimness half, and half in glory.  
But hist ! what gliding forms ? the priest—  
Yes—Dash himself, proceeding east,  
In cassock, and in cassock too,  
A scarlet boy the eyes pursue.  
They to the altar take their way,  
Dash chalice, paten there will lay,



How carefully enfolded both  
In superfine embroidered cloth.  
Six candles now they light, in vain  
Sunshine streams in through every pane.  
Preliminaries over, now  
With genuflexion, crossing, bow,  
They're coming, coming, one and all,  
Strikes up the hymn processional !  
Hail acolyte ! hail chorister !  
Aquarius hail ! and Thurifer !  
This sprays the faithful with his wave,  
That incense sheds, demurely grave.  
Hail Standard-bearer ! tall and lean,  
Exalting Mary's form serene !  
Hail curate ! yes, hail one and all,  
Procession ceremonial !  
In chasuble, and maniple,  
And garments more than I can tell,  
Short surplice, amice, copes, and stoles,  
Red cassocks too (God save your souls !)

Rare and rich vestments, but in truth  
Somewhat outlandish and uncouth,  
And mimicking fantastic Rome  
With millinery made at home.  
Your eyes on yonder couple fix  
Whose waists bear up a crucifix,  
Brother and sister, cassocked he,  
White-capped in gown of sable, she :  
Woe on the schoolboy, luckless wight,  
Failing obeisance when in sight  
Of the high altar, or to bow  
As Mary sails exalted now ;  
The brother, ere he gain his pew,  
Comes sharp, and sudden, full in view,  
And ducks, and ducks his recreant head,  
Example this to all misled !  
The rest I catalogued before  
As they proceeded from the door,  
But did (how thoughtlessly we err !)  
Omit to name the Crucifer !

Lo ! there he stalks among the rest  
In ritual garment duly dressed,  
Curates, and choristers, and three  
Selected all of high degree  
To bear the censer, flag, or bell ;  
O, mark each youthful actor well !  
Mark every visage, pale and sunk,  
No meeker nun, no leaner monk,  
One stamp of countenance you find,  
The ascetic and fanatic mind,  
All passions centring into one,  
Fierce, as cramped brooks that swiftest run ;  
So follow they with dull dead glance  
Of each down-looking countenance  
Obedient to their pastor's call,  
A white-browed band, anæmic all !  
Nor male, nor female quite, I deem,  
So semi-sexual they seem.

## V

## SOLILOQUY

"O, COUNTRY cousins, what a scene!

"Where does it tend? what can it mean?"

“Is this the way towns worship God ?

“(Ah ! then may I remain a clod.)

“Are these thine idols, Israel ?

“Then why not Ashtoreth, or Bel?”

"But look! but hark! strange sight, strange sound,

“ Our eyes must daze, our ears must wound.

"The lectern is an old affair,

"Never the priest reads lesson there,

“ But from the altar, ’tis his plan

“To glorify that all he can,

“And seated halfway in the choir,

“Where all may witness and admire,

“He’ll preach ; the pulpit’s out of date,

“A central seat has more of state,

“But what he says you scarce can catch,

“Rhapsodic with a purple patch.

“ About the Saints, about the Virgin,  
“ Not loud and clear as Mr Spurgeon,  
“ But hurried, Dash was always fast,  
“ And mumbles now with look downcast,  
“ One long gesticulation still  
“ His sermon, whether good or ill.

“ Now for the censings—they go on  
“ From first to last, till all be done ;  
“ Prior the altar’s turn, and when  
“ The gospel’s read, ’tis censed again,  
“ Nor can the offertory speed  
“ Without pastilles (yes—stare indeed !)  
“ Then must the priest be censed, and next  
“ The congregation, else how vexed :  
“ But when ‘ high mass ’ is reached, a bell  
“ Is softly heard the fact to tell,  
“ While the church tower with louder tone  
“ Proclaims ‘ the sacrifice ’ is done.  
“ A wafer big in mouth is thrust,  
“ Thus take it the recipient must ;

“Mutters ‘the celebrant’ the while  
“Words low and fast in hurried style;  
“The kneelers with the cross they sign,  
“Ere granted yet to taste the wine,  
“Not without water, for the two  
“The symbol make, if hearts be true,  
“Which from gilt cruets he will pour,  
“While meekly they, who drink, adore,  
“And mumbles always every word  
“So swiftly that it drops unheard.  
“’Tis said some on their belly fall,  
“And to and from the altar crawl,  
“Extreme in their humility,  
“And thus to heaven for pardon sigh,  
“Kissing the steps—what name insist  
“Upon for them? ‘Ventrambulist?’  
“What then, and comes it now to this  
“That God’s great boon is hit or miss,  
“Unless as earth-worms we draw near,  
“In servile superstitious fear,

“ Craving for grace with bated breath ?

“ Old heathen Ovid better saith,

“ Who bids us raise our gaze on high,

“ And front, so formed, the deity :

“ Not so did wrestling Jacob pray

“ Of old through night to dawn of day,

“ But grappled with the angel still

“ If thus he might attain his will,

“ Nay warrant stronger for the course

“ Which bids us take our heaven by force,

“ And gain the everlasting sky

“ By penitent audacity,

“ Yea, thus—but each in chamber sole,

“ Making no pageant of the soul.

“ As for the rest, 'tis hard to see

“ What ceremonial acts they be :

“ Now, at the altar as he stands,

“ The priest appears to wash his hands

“ In ewer held by acolyte,

“ They call it the ‘lavabo’ rite ;

- “ Strange usages, once give a name,  
“ Are soon familiarised by fame :  
“ What next ? ah ! is it truth or fable ?  
“ He’s kissing the communion table !  
“ Pardon—Communion’s not in vogue,  
“ ’Tis ‘ altar ’ in their dialogue,  
“ And there the solemn rite is done,  
“ Again not called ‘ communion,’  
“ But ‘ celebration,’ ‘ sacrifice,’  
“ Or ‘ mass ! ’ Away with all device.  
“ Whate’er the names, the lofty priest,  
“ Crossing and bowing faces East,  
“ And with back turned upon his flock  
“ Stoops down to kiss the insensate block :  
“ O, fetish worship of a tree !  
“ Is this the nineteenth century ?  
“ This done, he rears his solemn hands,  
“ And, rapt as in a reverie, stands.  
“ Much more I might enumerate,  
“ But who could every detail state ?



“ The notices of ‘ mass,’ and when  
“ For women now, and now for men,  
“ Hour, place, confessional are given,  
“ Where each in turn is duly shriven.  
“ O, deadliest of all deadly drugs,  
“ Weapon of Jesuits, worse than Thugs ;  
“ They killed the body, these enmesh  
“ The soul, entangled through the flesh.  
“ Now manual acts that cheat the eye !  
“ ‘ The elements ’ upraised on high !  
“ There could not more dexterity  
“ In prestidigitateur be !  
“ The altar-piece how gilt and grand  
“ With statues flanking either hand,  
“ The goddess-mother in red paint,  
“ And red some lesser patron saint.  
“ Then, oh ! the lady-chapel’s door  
“ A monstrous crucifix hangs o’er,  
“ There in a temporary shrine  
“ The picture of some new divine,

- “ Stone altars, too, you may behold,  
“ Dalmatics, vestments manifold,  
“ Tunics, and haberdashery  
“ Sorted ecclesiastically.  
“ Such vanities might smiles provoke,  
“ But oh ! the lights—they are no joke,  
“ Though with a quaking touch one handles  
“ Questions that burn, and Roman candles.  
“ Their *raison d’être* is hard to show,  
“ And why, and when they light them so.  
“ Just now the scarlet mannikin,  
“ Ere yet the service did begin,  
“ Six on the altar lighted up :  
“ (Was’t to show chalice, pyx, and cup ?)  
“ And now in scarlet cassocks two  
“ Precede the priest, and full in view  
“ Uphold a flaming candle each,  
“ Some Daniel say what these may teach !  
“ If only superstitious night  
“ Might thus be banished out of sight.

- " Some hold that, if one candle's lit,  
" 'Tis God that's signified by it,  
" Two mean both God and Christ, but three  
" Must celebrate the Trinity;  
" Then on some crowded altars rise  
" A dozen of inferior size ;  
" These are of course the twelve Apostles,  
" John elbows James, Paul Peter jostles.  
" O, can it be ? are these things thus ?  
" Such rites ! such ceremonial fuss !  
" From which the soul that longs to pray  
" Devout, distracted turns away.  
" And tired with tricked out man and boy,  
" Vain superstitious gaud and toy,  
" With upward eye would soar and seek  
" Its God, in spirit calm and meek ;  
" Idly, where head and heart must ache,  
" Such reek stale flowers, gas, incense make,  
" While more nerve-wearing than the smell  
" Jangles the intermittent bell :

- “ Then, who can keep an earnest gaze,  
“ When comes Aquarius, and sprays  
“ Nose, eyes, and ears, and half the time  
“ Passes in petty pantomime ?  
“ Is this the bread by which men live ?  
“ The wine of God by which they thrive ?  
“ The manna this, on which we feed,  
“ Sole comfort of our direst need ?  
“ Are these the herbs that heal the soul ?  
“ Purge man of sin, and make him whole ?  
“ Better than this vain dress and show,  
“ Which deify the priest below,  
“ And set mere lamps and rites above  
“ Knowledge of God, and fear, and love,  
“ The tales of old Olympus’ court,  
“ Or the proud Stoics’ self-support,  
“ Though these can ne’er again impart  
“ Or bliss, or strength to time’s worn heart.  
“ Was it for ends like these indeed  
“ Our sires saw martyrs burn and bleed ?

- “ A world reborn in splendid youth  
“ With champions wrestling for the truth ?  
“ Tetzal by Luther’s scorn defied ?  
“ And bigot Philip’s broken pride ?  
“ For this that candles flare by day  
“ Mocking the sun’s meridian ray ?  
“ That men, like Ephesus of old,  
“ Should with their loud invectives scold,  
“ And this the theme of their tirade—  
“ ‘ Spoil not the neat wax-chandler’s trade ! ’  
“ O, priests, like tapers which ye use,  
“ Only to darken and confuse,  
“ Is’t thus ye barter for the sky  
“ Rushlights for every groping eye ?  
“ Nor know how subtle is the line  
“ Parts common-sense from the divine ?  
“ What, ere he yet has grasped his A.B.,  
“ Teach mariolatry to baby ?  
“ And ban and bar all souls in schism  
“ That fail to read your catechism ?

“ That, following the prayer-book, say,  
“ No prayers for dear ones passed away,  
“ And fail to pour into your ear  
“ Youth’s innocence made morbid fear ?  
“ That fast not duly, duly bend,  
“ Nor at high altar ‘ mass ’ attend ?  
“ But tell me then what should be said  
“ In prayer for these we loved, our dead ?  
“ Their record closed, their trial done,  
“ The verdict is with God alone.  
“ Think you above flies earth’s vague rumour  
“ With some sad touch of kindly humour,  
“ Moving the spirits of the spheres  
“ With the soft tendency to tears  
“ O’er mortal coil and human things  
“ From memory’s pathetic springs ?  
“ Fancy too vain, too far the bourne,  
“ Nor voice may reach, nor voice return,  
“ No message hail, no echoes float  
“ From far dim skies, ye idly dote.”

- “Come, country cousins, come away,  
“We’ve seen, we’ve heard enough to-day.  
“Well may ye ask, ‘can this be true?’  
“O for some euphrasy and rue!  
“My brain, calm mostly, spins and whirls,  
“Though twenty years your senior, girls;  
“Turn ash to oak, and oak to ash,  
“If this be our parental Dash,  
“Our rector, the beloved of old,  
“Who safely shepherded the fold,  
“Shared all our merry games and sports,  
“The jocund friend, ne’er out of sorts,  
“With open heart and ready hand  
“Cheering the pilgrim in the land,  
“Who, with his wife and daughters twain,  
“Sweetened sad lives, and solaced pain.”  
“Christ keep us safe from Satan’s power!  
“O let us fly this very hour,  
“And never loiter, never stop  
“Till back again at Turniptop.”

“Adieu, my dears, I quite agree,

“Your only safety is to flee.”

## VI

### POINTS OF VIEW

THERE are who interview the great,  
Or big (we sometimes overrate)  
And sharp with mental kodak snap  
Characteristic traits mayhap ;  
And I had hoped to lunch, or dine  
With him I loved in auld lang syne,  
And guide perchance the facile chat  
By step and step from this and that  
To his stupendous change—in vain—  
Clergy alone he'd entertain,  
In worship morn, noon, eve, engaged,  
While yet a week his octave raged,  
And, ere the fever had gone down,  
Needs must I quit that smoky town.



Still what I could I gleaned : tongue, pen,  
Revel about uncommon men,  
And our new press-gang nothing spares  
To season, and to sell its wares :  
Hence culled then prythee read a few  
Of our D.D.'s fresh points of view.

'Tis Dash, but rural Dash no more,  
He's cast his skin, he's learnt to soar ;  
The church is all, and all is schism  
Not bowed to sacerdotalism.  
Bishops, archbishops, what are they,  
If not enthroned the proper way ?  
Successors of the lineal stock,  
That traces back to Peter's rock ?  
Fresh orders he, might but the Pope  
Indulge his ultramontane hope,  
Now from the Vatican would sue,  
But then there's celibacy too !  
And will he put away his dame ?  
Jesu ! the flesh is hard to tame !

How can he sever from his wife,  
So long the partner of his life?  
Break—yes—his ordination vows,  
Scarce those that knit him to his spouse :  
Sure otherwise at once he'd fly  
Straight to infallibility,  
And leave for ever in the lurch  
This fraud of an anarchic church,  
A sin-born vile Erastian thing,  
Mean spawn of an adulterous king,  
Which Tudor Bluebeard wrenched from Rome,  
To sin more easily at home,  
Once the paternal pontiff's pride,  
Torn thence, and in state shackles tied.  
But he state shackles all will flout,  
No hesitation now, nor doubt,  
Nor old prescription stays his hand,  
Not born to reason, but command.  
For, if archbishops halt and quake,  
Or peace by compromise would make,

Then to the priest the case is clear,  
The church than prelate is more dear,  
And still, though fain to kneel in awe,  
He to himself must now be law.  
All this Dash in his carnal youth  
Knew not, but now has learned the truth,  
And, henceforth a sound Anglican,  
Must God prefer to any man.  
This premiss granted, it is next  
Evolved, as sermon from its text,  
That Ritual, dogma follow suit,  
Priest ordering, bishops—deaf, blind, mute,  
Or, if they do remonstrate, mild,  
As mother to her sucking child ;  
But mostly they the priest exalt,  
“ Objectors only are in fault,  
“ What would our Church of England be  
“ Without its elasticity ? ”  
Alas ! cant talk will never save  
A church, whose own priests dig its grave,

And, if the tottering fabric falls,  
'Twill be through foes inside the walls ;  
As for her enemies without,  
Those she may pacify or rout.  
But these remarks, though á propos,  
Are rather obiter, I know,  
So to our parson back again—  
O may I not have lived in vain,  
Proud boast of every preface, if  
I can but paint him clear and vif :  
Borne headlong on full ritual tide,  
All chartered sea-marks cast aside,  
Nor shifting sands, sunk rocks heeds he,  
Sole pilot in extremity,  
Exulting even in his joy  
To mock some old familiar buoy.  
Still he confesses to a want ;  
“The layman’s help ”—or is it cant ?  
The first thing needed is their cash,  
Their absence next ; is’t not so, Dash ?

Confessor and absolver, he  
Makes freest use of Peter's key,  
Appointing times and seasons, when  
To hear the women, and the men,  
Nor spares he children to invite  
Callow to that forbidden rite,  
Most inconsistent, too, be't said,  
For he'd a maggot in his head—  
That baptism be delayed, until  
More ripe the mind, more firm the will,  
Thus he'd baptise at fitter age,  
Confirming, too, at the same stage,  
And make one ceremony do  
The simultaneous work of two ;  
For "at fifteen, that time unlickèd,"  
Said he, "the youngsters are so wicked."  
As for the doctrine of reserve, he  
Held it : immoral, topsy-turvy !  
But to be fair, and to be brief,  
The mind is warped to its belief,

We soon deceive ourselves, and then  
Jesuits become, nine out of ten,  
And this the Spaniard's sons know well,  
Pivoting souls by heaven and hell,  
Root these by terror's spell, but those  
Less pliant with indulgence gloze,  
And systematically plan  
By his own bait to catch each man.  
But lest I wander from my theme,  
I track it not to its extreme,  
Enough has been detailed at least,  
And that is better than a feast.

## VII

## ST DIONYSIUS!

THE fisherman in haste undid,  
So runs the tale, the casket's lid,  
Then shook to see, with mouth agape,  
Smoke writhing into form and shape,

And marvelled what he'd been about  
To let the monstrous giant out,  
But somehow still with mother-wit  
Contrived again to prison it,  
And, sealing down the lid once more,  
Hurled back the casket from the shore.  
Not so with Dash : once loosed, he towers  
Aloft with unexpected powers,  
Giving his spirit elbow room  
To spurn dull earth with flying plume,  
Nor bishop, nor archbishop can  
Arrest the genius of the man,  
Nor will he of himself descend  
To humdrum, and his gambols end.  
Surely the man is not the same,  
Though still he bears his father's name,  
In all things else supremely strange  
Eclipsing Harlequin in change !  
O ! had he but obscure remained  
In country parts, he might have gained

Some simpler fame, if less renown  
Priest of the meretricious town,  
And, splendid as a rural dean,  
If not archdeacon, swelled the scene.  
O, metamorphosis complete !  
O, feat transcending Blondin's feat,  
Dash in excelsis walks on high,  
Disdaining earth, surveying sky,  
On stilts, on ropes aloft he treads,  
Too dizzy for our human heads.  
O perfect metamorphosis !  
Dash worthy of the golden rose is !  
Why halt ? why halt at half-way house ?  
Rome beckons, Christ's unquestioned spouse ;  
Why not to Rome ? to Rome, indeed,  
With terra-cotta church and creed !  
Why not the holy toe salute  
Ripe convert in obeisance mute ?  
Might not for thee, first re-ordained,  
A see "in partibus" be gained ?



A fitter bishopric in time ?  
Then the cardinalate sublime ?  
There thou at length, no man more fit,  
Might'st with thy scarlet brothers sit,  
Wool's softest sifted pallium wear,  
Mitre with jewelled crosier bear ;  
Why not, O why should not at last,  
Ere yet thy setting sun be past,  
On pate the triple crown descend ?  
O, climax ! O, majestic end !  
When to the faithful thou'lt indite  
Thy great encyclicals, and write  
" Urbi et orbi " bull and brief,  
Rome's wide-world visionary chief,  
Pontiff supreme, august, elate,  
At Easter's festival in state,  
Serve high mass summâ gloriâ  
Borne " sede gestatoriâ,"  
Fulmine from Vatican and dome  
The loud anathemas of Rome !

What more? Last honours, after death,  
Canonisation! (O, my breath!)

Yes—after death and burial—please you—  
St Dionysius! Holy Jesu!

## INTERLUDE

SOME say, extreme philosophers,  
At least a thousand million years  
Our planet needed to become  
For man and beast a living home ;  
Others, less postulating, ask  
But a bare fortieth for the task,  
And think in millions twenty-five  
Evolving time might all contrive  
From atoms first concomitant  
Down to the latest gnat or ant :  
Maybe—the riddle beats my brain,  
Which likes things unperplexed and plain,  
And notes but, while you others list  
Yon keen paleontologist,  
That, if time dragged of old a bit,

To-day quite compensates for it.  
'Tis rush, roar, and electric speed,  
Velocity is all the need ;  
Still to be first in life's mad scramble,  
Play-bill, advertisement, preamble,  
If but the fly upon the wheel  
That makes the dust (I rather feel  
The nearer looms the hour to die,  
How insignificant am I !)  
Still to be first by hook or crook,  
And noted by a public look.  
(Absurd ! for when the greatest go,  
Gladstones and Bismarcks, brief the woe,  
Though loud at first, as we peruse  
In eager haste to-morrow's news.)  
Still to be first, and to proclaim  
Our titles to eternal fame,  
Blazon our lives, and write them too  
In hardy annual, " who's who ?"  
Little red vade mecum where,

Each an autobiographer,  
Our puffed frog—oxen celebrate  
Their feats (no failures !) up to date :  
O, what a flutter ! what a stir !  
Historiaster, poetaster,  
The criticling, art-connoisseur,  
Paragraphist, and interviewer,  
The would-be statesman, and ah ! those  
With loudest brays, or shrillest crows,  
Who to the universe proclaim  
Just once a year their world-wide fame,  
Omniscient oracles, and cut  
Fine figures with grand air and strut  
On their provincial hills of dung,  
(None else presume to wag a tongue)  
So lordly ants parade in state,  
On whom their fellow-insects wait.  
Then mutual admiration tribes,  
Where artists artists, scribes puff scribes—  
What's to be done ? what's to be said

When frothy heart prompts shallow head?  
Should deadly desperadoes meet,  
A whiff of grapeshot clears the street,  
But, if ca' me ca' thee's the rule,  
What then? a puff of ridicule.  
As for your great man, he indeed  
Is not so common for our need,  
Poet, or statesman, or profound  
Philosopher—they don't abound,  
One in a century maybe—  
(I waive the aloe simile.)  
To limbo too with all such trash as  
Phoenixes rising from their ashes!  
Be silent now my carping Puck,  
You've blown your steam off, run your muck  
So prithee once more let us feel  
Respectable and quite genteel,  
And get back to our ruts again  
With the old homely jog-trot strain,  
Where Dash, ambitious in his sphere,

Flies with the rest in full career,  
A very clerical John Gilpin,  
Brats howling round him, and curs yelping,  
O, what a rider ! what a nag !  
Like very racer from the flag,  
He's got the bit between his teeth,  
His feet they mock the turf beneath,  
Nor bishop, nor archbishop can  
Arrest the genius of the man :  
But stop—you've heard it all before,  
Grant, Muses, that I may not bore.  
For what's more tedious and stale  
Than hashing up a twice-told tale ?  
Still drive things home one must, John Bull,  
Dear man, is just a trifle dull.

## PART III

### I

#### DIVERS OPINIONS

NEVER a public man may be  
Eccentric with impunity,  
And, if his orbit do not move  
Exact in the appointed groove,  
Be sure that all the world will spy  
His oddities with critic eye ;  
But, if he's more erratic yet,  
A star that does not rise or set  
With motions duly timed and known,  
But wilful holds strange course, his own,  
Like some wild comet, whose long tail  
Shrouds half the sky with misty veil,



Then let him hope not to escape  
Scandal's and gossip's Protean shape,  
And, least of all, if he like Dash  
In the religious world outflash.  
(This is digressive ; skip or skim,  
Reader, according to your whim,  
Still relevant, nor out of joint,  
I'm coming quickly to the point.)  
Thus 'tis why Mrs Dorcas Doughty,  
Religious, elderly, and gouty,  
The widow of a martial spouse,  
Cries, "fig for ordination vows !  
"Bursts through them Dash, and heeds no more  
"Than Jane, dust sweeping from the door ;  
"My major-general had a head,  
"Bluff man, but straight, and often said,  
" "In the church militant there are  
" "Thirty-nine articles of war,  
" "And they, who break their marching orders,  
" "Should be drummed out across the borders.' "

“ I see yet his emphatic frown,  
“ And wagged forefinger up and down.  
“ ’Tis well indeed, dear man, he’s gone,  
“ And sleeps at rest beneath his stone ;  
“ The danger every day increases,  
“ And soon the church must go to pieces.”  
Tongue given once, ’tis soon full cry,  
As now their fox in front they spy ;  
Miss Tabby, and Miss Biddy, both  
To miss their own shrill voices loth,  
Shriek, “ Demas, Judas,” in a breath,  
“ Woe to the ways that lead to death ! ”  
Two sisters with more kindly tone,  
Lady Drusilla, Lady Joan,  
With eyes above their saucers’ rim  
Scarce raised, lisp—“ oh ! we pity him,  
“ Poor erring soul ! God grant him grace,  
“ Ere yet he run his mortal race.”  
With this the reverend Peter Pope  
Does not agree—“ past hope, past hope,

“Methinks, is Dash, a carnal man,  
“And he will end as he began.  
“Too much he loved his gun and rod  
“In youth, and made of each a god,  
“Now, older grown, and stiff for sport  
“To mock religion he pays court,  
“And, puffed with flattery, shows his wares,  
“Gauds, gewgaws, pomps, and Romish snares,  
“Which Christ would whip out, stock and sample,  
“As once he whipped such from his temple.”  
“Brave words, true thoughts, sir, every one,  
“No compromise with Babylon !  
“Poor Dash ! ’tis scarcely all his fault,  
“So much the women him exalt ;  
“Well—there are women, children still,  
“Some churches else would never fill.  
“Miraculously changed—they say—  
“As Saul of Tarsus—ah ! to-day  
“‘A miracle’s an easy feat,  
“Extremes of wit and folly meet,

“ And hundreds every hour are cured,  
“ Or think so ('tis enough) at Lourdes :  
“ Such ways from ours and us be far,  
“ Anathema, Maranatha ! ”

Thus Silas Stark orated next,  
Enlarging upon Peter's text,  
Then spread his hands, as if in waiting  
He saw, and exorcised a Satan.  
Last brothers Habakkuk and Ben  
In solemn chorus joined “ Amen ! ”  
'Twas ditto, ditto ditto, still,  
All flung their stones with right good will,  
Save the soft sisters, tender twain,  
Who still eschewed all words of pain,  
And, sighing heavenwards, hoped and craved,  
Dash, too, might in the end be saved.

From Aristotle you may glean  
That truth lies ever in the mean,  
But human nature much prefers  
Extremes, and therefore mostly errs,

Now censuring without stint or measure,  
Now wildly lauding at its pleasure ;  
So still it's either damn, or saint,  
With blackest, or with whitest paint,  
But most in the religious world  
The priest from pedestal is hurled,  
Or else exalted to the skies  
By the fond crowd that deifies.  
So fared it with our Dash ; for, while  
To these he seemed all sin and guile,  
And to the left they did devote  
His soul with the ill-favoured goat,  
Other tea-tables oft were thronged  
With partizans, who thought him wronged,  
And hailed him "hero, saint, or angel,  
"Bright herald of a blest evangel,"  
Who loved his ritual ornate,  
Subscribed rich sacrificial plate,  
Crossed, bowed, prostrated, genuflected,  
And in their hearts his shrine erected,

Sniffed incense with devoutest face,  
And felt a new baptismal grace,  
When acolyte from syringe-shed  
His holy sprays upon each head,  
Set the high altar in array,  
Heedless of mockers by the way—  
(For what's the mob's uncertain gust,  
Their gods to-day to-morrow dust ?)  
Worked cloths, and covers by the score  
With crosses duly covered o'er,  
And for his feet, beyond his need,  
Slippers, as for a centipede !  
Then for the octaves of the year,  
As Christmas, Easter tide drew near,  
Banner with fringe of silk, or flag,  
(For pious zeal must never lag)  
And thrilled to see them borne on high  
In the procession passing by.

Your mundane person at the clubs,  
As with some friend he shoulder rubs

Has not much time which he can waste  
On Dash, and his peculiar taste,  
But 'twixt turf-talk, and politics,  
Or ere for whist quartette they fix,  
If conversation run that way,  
“A harmless lunatic” might say :  
Some barrister, ere yet he sink  
In his arm-chair, “a crank,” I think :  
And then, perhaps, a doctor there  
“Mad as a hatter” will declare—  
“Nor was the sage’s dictum vain  
“Which ruled the bulk of men insane,  
“For some need less, and some need more,  
“But all their purge of hellebore.”  
“Hell of a bore, indeed ! my friend—  
“Will this cursed chatter never end ?  
“Pray, what is all the coil and fash ?  
“And who, and what this Mister Dash ?”  
So cries a fourth—“come, let’s proceed,  
“The trump is turned—hearts—yours to lead.”

His words almost I blush to write,  
Vernacular, but impolite ;  
The brusque good fellow loves to trade  
On " Sir, I call a spade a spade."

## II

## RETROSPECT

THUS I record what stones were hurled,  
A lauding choir, the careless world.  
But still—how came it all about ?  
You've heard three sides, and yet there's  
doubt ;  
Maybe the fourth side of the square  
At last will clarify the air.  
Nor pleases me, or that, or this,  
Either extreme hypothesis,  
A miracle, say some, from heaven,



With grace most opportunely given,  
While t'other side, not quite so civil,  
Roundly declare 'tis all the devil :  
No theory will I assert—  
(I never was cocksure or pert)  
But whisper may in accents meek,  
Devil, or god are far to seek,  
When human reasons may be found  
From giddy feet to cut the ground,  
Why trace to an eccentric cause  
What may be solved by nature's laws ?  
Nor chance, nor miracle, it seems  
Rule mundane things, who thinks so dreams ;  
But cause and law attend events,  
From antecedents consequents.  
Then there's the madness' theory—'tis  
An easy cheap hypothesis,  
Held by the idle, or the blind,  
Of shallow, or impatient mind.  
Thus critics settle Hamlet—" Oh !

A gifted prince, but mad—you know ;”  
Gifted, forsooth ! yes—next the gods,  
Equipped to cope with direst odds,  
And yet stalemated after all,  
So may the highest deepest fall !  
He leaves to chance the final stroke,  
His Denmark to a foreign yoke.  
“ Well—Lear, at least, you must admit,  
“ Was utterly devoid of wit : ”  
Say rather—of all self-control,  
Weak king of an unbalanced soul,  
Rule others at his will and beck ?  
Nay, not himself, and hence the wreck,  
Spreading disaster round—here lies  
Essence of deeper tragedies,  
Than in pourtraying, lesson vain,  
The freaks of a disordered brain.  
Be these things how they may, I know,  
Some biographic facts, which throw  
A light on Dash’s curious change—

(Only things unexplained are strange.)

So, with your leave, will here supply

## Appendix, or apology,

Call't as you will, for his career,

Then smile, or drop your human tear,

As tragic muse, or Comus rules,

Apes once, men still are often fools,

So Darwin, and some great man, too,

Proved, but I can't remember who.

Revert we then to Turniptop,

Delightful rural scene, but stop.

Has something happened to my sight?

The place, like Dash, is altered quite :

Where's my old pal, the rustie clown?

The village where ? none—see a town !

Where are the cottages grown o'er

With jessamine about the door ?

Where honeysuckle, mignonette

Distilling sweets ? I scent them yet,

Still feel the fragrant Zephyrs fan

My cheeks, as when life lightly ran.  
Alas ! and is old Double dead ?  
(O, fainting heart, and reeling head !)  
And let to strangers court and park,  
Nay—from no dog a welcome bark ?  
Nor will his native form be seen  
With Dash again on village green ?  
Alas ! 'tis misery, I vow,  
To think of then, and think of now,  
When squire and rector stood before  
The homely rustic's open door,  
Chatting in their familiar way,  
With each and all, and then "good-day."  
Alas ! abutting on the road,  
One place, one uniform abode,  
Linked each to each along the street,  
My gaze what doleful dwellings meet,  
Just of a height, and type the same,  
Such was the contract, more the shame,  
Which drove the home-born rustic out,

Ah ! Phyllis, and ah ! Colin Clout,  
Forbade the waving flower to grow,  
And reared instead yon hideous row !  
In these the operatives house,  
And there the taps where they carouse.  
Lo ! where two flaunting factories tower,  
For wealth, like knowledge, too, is power,  
And wealth decrees that either stands  
A workshop for five hundred hands :  
I know not, and I care not, I,  
What 'tis they spin, or weave, or dye,  
But ever must that hour deplore  
Which reared those fabrics frowning o'er  
The village green, and gave the place  
To smoke, and an exotic race.  
'Twas Bobbin's, and 'twas Guano's will,  
Who bought, and share between them still  
The lands, new despots of the soil,  
And, paying, regulate the toil.  
Bobbin self-made from cotton sprung,

T'other grew opulent from dung ;  
Vespasian-like, as we may guess,  
The coin to him was odourless :  
Both vulgar, of the letter shy  
Missed often between g and i.

There are, who o'er the census gloat  
Decennial, and fondly dote,  
When to our Saxon race accrue  
Some millions more, say double two,  
And with a cock-a-doodle strut  
Vaunt how prolific still ! but, tut !  
For what are numbers worth indeed  
Of a degenerated breed ?  
What are weak arms, and flabby muscle,  
When 't comes to some heroic tussle ?  
How shall we ever hold our own  
Without the blood, without the bone,  
The sinew, and the strength of yore,  
Which won our battles o'er and o'er ?  
Numbers indeed ! what are they ? stuff !

Xerxes had millions enough  
To have o'errun from east to west  
All Europe at his proud behest,  
Mere hordes without a country—see  
Routed by foemen few, but free :  
Always one tale ; so, not to bore,  
Read history for it o'er and o'er.  
But, if again no champion Greece  
May save the world, why welcome peace,  
If but the ukase of a Czar  
(Strange dream) for aye extinguish war !  
But this, too, irks—where will it end ?  
Must still the blackened town extend ?  
This way, and that still overlap  
Without one bright oasis gap ?  
South Lancashire, how can they live  
In your one vast and seething hive ?  
Ah ! London with five million souls !  
And still, and still thy map outrolls !  
Reflection's baffled—so I turn

To my immediate concern ;  
Let Hamlet prose o'er Yorick's skull,  
But moralising's mostly dull,  
And dulness is, nor least in rhyme,  
The one unpardonable crime.

Where's now the church that stood apart  
With porch and arch of Norman art,  
Low-roofed, with ivy overgrown ?  
Here, too, the old-world charm is flown :  
No houses then encroached around,  
Trim was the consecrated ground,  
And mound and tomb, now crumbling fast,  
Kept evergreen the living past.

Now to the very lych-gate press  
Cottage on cottage, mess on mess !  
" Come, sexton, once more let me in,  
" What ? congregation growing thin ?  
" Rector not liked ? " " O, sir ! no fool,  
" But duller than a stagnant pool,  
" So chapels draw, or to his gall



“The heedless mob goes not at all.”  
“O, melancholy change ! but now  
“Tell me when Double died, and how.”  
“Alas ! he was but seventy-four,  
“And should have lived his ten years more,  
“But ’gan to break before his time,  
“So long he seemed scarce past his prime,  
“A rare ripe man with age he grapples,  
“And ruddy, too, as his own apples ;  
“But things, you see, for him went ill,  
“Then more and more against his will,  
“For, though ne’er proud, he loved to rule  
“The place, his own domestic school,  
“A mild paternal despot, Sir,  
“And dear to all, man, child, and cur.  
“However he could never brook  
“‘The ill-conditioned upstarts’ look”  
“The manufacturing pair, who cleared  
“The grounds, and hideous houses reared,  
“Till, when the chimneys belched their smoke

"All o'er his park, 'twas past a joke.  
"Their politics, too, were not his,  
"Indeed he thought them much amiss,  
" 'Tories ' he said ' of the worst kind,  
" 'Men of mean money-grabbing mind ;  
" 'Why, Sir, they haven't even breed,  
" 'Born to pile wealth up, and to feed.' "  
Now, too, he felt his health decline,  
Cared not for whist, cared not for wine ;  
"His teeth fell out, his cheeks fell in,  
"Lank neck scarce propped his double chin,  
"That forward drooped upon his breast.  
"Scarce now he walked when at his best,  
"Nor longer rode to hounds, no more  
"Shot down his partridge as before,  
"But mounted on his quiet cob  
"('Twould from your heart have fetched a sob  
"To note his altered look and mien)  
"Paced slowly down the village green,  
"Or round his farms, and chatted still

“Kindly, but harped how things went ill,  
“And to some tenant, aging too,  
“Would say times suit nor me, nor you,  
“‘Well—well—we’ve had our innings, friend,  
“‘To die we must, and there an end.’  
“Still to the last we did admire  
“Our perfect gentleman and squire.  
“His memory went, and often he  
“Repeated more emphatically  
“What just before perchance he’d said,  
“Leant hard on stick, and shook his head.  
“But when he knew nor horse, nor hound,  
“Leaping to lick with eager bound,  
“Alas ! poor crouching Dan and Pope,  
“We knew his case was past all hope,  
“And so, to cut the story short,  
“One morn beheld the shuttered court ;  
“A chill despised inflamed each lung  
“And for the squire the bell was rung.  
“His tablet is upon the wall,

“A great example to us all.”

I looked, and read in undertone  
How good a man from earth had gone :  
His epitaph provoked a smile,  
Perhaps writ in too Johnsonian style  
(No doubt 'twas from the rector's pen,  
Best fitted he of living men)  
Yet, resonant with tonic ring,  
Praised virtues sans the other thing,  
Thus generous, not ostentatious,  
Severely just, serenely gracious,  
Not proud, but holding high his head,  
Nor lavish, though the poor he fed ;  
In short he'd everything that's right  
Without its vicious opposite.  
Thus, in the main both just and true,  
The rector gave the squire his due.

Once more I turned me to my friend—

“You've told me much, just add the end,

“How went the property ? to whom ?

“Does any squire in Dash’s room?”  
Said he—“the tale will not be long,  
“I’ll tell you all I know, ding-dong.  
“The squire’s relations were but few,  
“A nephew’s nephew, coz or two.  
“Though distant, still the heir-at-law  
“His title proved without a flaw,  
“Took court and lands, and certain money,  
“‘The hive shan’t go without some honey,’  
“So said the squire, he could not bear  
“Fences should spoil in disrepair,  
“Drains be neglected, or a wall  
“Go tottering to its final fall:  
“‘’Twould wake me in my tomb,’ said he—  
“‘Such posthumous enormity,  
“‘If any said by my undoing  
“‘The old place went to rack and ruin:  
“‘’Tis true—I care not for my heir,  
“‘Still he shall have what I can spare,  
“‘And quantum suff: the fault be his

“ ‘Whatever after goes amiss.’  
“ His cousins, whom he barely knew,  
“ Five thousand each, he left the two.  
“ The residue went all to Dash,  
“ Full fifty thousand pounds in cash ;  
“ For Dash to him was as a son,  
“ More loved, as more the years rolled on :  
“ His friends, too, were a scattered band,  
“ So anchored he on him at hand.  
“ Stirred too sad feelings, and perchance  
“ The remnant of his young romance,  
“ Scar of a wound ne’er soundly healed,  
“ Tho’ ne’er to eye profane revealed,  
“ The memory of a youthful wife,  
“ The twelvemonth partner of his life,  
“ None might succeed her in his view  
“ So fair, so tender, and so true.  
“ So lived he solus evermore,  
“ And hope of progeny forswore.  
“ But, where her portrait hid the wall,

“Often his eyes were seen to fall,  
“Still, as he gazed upon that smile,  
“Murmuring—‘her very look,’ the while,  
“And sighs would heave, and tears would start,  
“Warm welling from his vivid heart.”

Touched by the tale, I turned aside,  
(We English all emotion hide)  
And sought to cultivate a calm,  
Leaving a florin in his palm ;  
Then, issuing from the oaken door,  
Went forth to glean a little more.  
Still in that once fair village lived  
Some who in better days had thrived,  
Tenants, dependents of the squire,  
Or servants worthy of their hire,  
Not unremembered in his will,  
And to his memory faithful still.  
Such I sought out, nor one refused  
To tell, when the fond tongue was loosed,  
All that he knew, or she could add

Of Dash, and Double, glib and glad.  
As to the latter there's no more  
Material than told before,  
But of the rector what they said,  
I pieced together in my head,  
And, setting the chief points before ye,  
Report the sequel of the story.

The rector thus inveighed, the first,  
Ere Double's health was at its worst.  
"Alas! quam tempora mutantur,  
"When Turniptop expects its ranter,  
"When butcher, tinker, tailor, any  
"Rude and unconsecrated zany  
"Bellows his lungs out in the air,  
"And drugs the mob with blatant prayer,  
"While we can scarce together hold  
"The remnant of our village fold,  
"You the loved squire, and I the priest,  
"By bishop's hands ordained at least.  
"This to that vulgar pair we owe,



“Who only live for wealth and show,  
“And now have turned, greed never stops,  
“Our hamlet into smoky shops :  
“Not even us, dear squire, they spare  
“‘Fumum et opes’ everywhere !  
“And our loved Turniptop must be  
“One darksome manufactory !”  
Groaned Double—“your disgust I share ;  
“O ! what a purseproud upstart pair,  
“Born rural happiness to blight,  
“And blot the landscape out of sight.”  
Cried Dash—“yon sky must blacker get,  
“Soot murkier chimneys vomit yet,  
“Ere I turn tail, and leave in lurch  
“My squire, my parish, and my church.  
“No—to the last by thee I’ll stand,”  
(Fond Double squeezed his filial hand.)  
“Long happy years we’ve shared together,  
“Nor part we in foul wind and weather ;—  
“Nay—tho’ the times are sadly trying,”

(You might have heard old Double sighing)  
"Queen, church, squire, parson, one and all,  
"Together stand, together fall."

As thus he eloquently speaks,  
Tears trickle down the old man's cheeks ;  
But worse and worse the days went on,  
Till came the worst, the squire was gone,  
And then, his whole world in a crash,  
Spirit and life went out of Dash.

O ! had I but the novelist's pen,  
I'd try to paint it o'er again  
Just for the millionth and first time,  
And for the prize compete in rhyme,  
That dismal period below,  
When all's so empty, don't you know !  
The world one wide and weary waste,  
Wine, water brackish to the taste,  
When all the cream of life turns sour,  
Till comes at last the tragic hour,  
Naught pleases, sport, or dance, or song,

And every mortal thing goes wrong,  
And in the slough of his despond  
The wretch eyes poison, or a pond :  
Who has not felt ? Who will not feel  
That ennui dark and hard to heal ?  
Alas ! when fell the final blow,  
'Twas with our rector even so ;  
Not that a man so good and pious  
Nursed any suicidal bias,  
Yet settled gloom was his, no flash  
Of merriment survived in Dash ;  
He'd hobble round dear Double's tomb,  
Himself a monument of gloom,  
With piteous lack-lustre eye  
Of old canine fidelity,  
With rayless, hopeless look indeed,  
And shunning sympathy in need ;  
Sad sight to see that altered man  
Ere middle life had reached its span ;  
Still, prompt and true at duty's call,

What was to do he did it all,  
Performed each customary rite,  
Ever at grave, at font in sight,  
Read, prayed, and preached as heretofore,  
But like the living Dash no more.  
His place to others now he'd yield  
At cricket, or the hunting field,  
Not now at football to be seen,  
Others must umpire on the green,  
And o'er the sports preside, where yet  
In smoky air few, fewer met.  
Apart, alone he moped and went  
With downcast visage, bowed and bent :  
Around the neighbours shook their heads ;  
"Lighter, two stone at least, he treads."  
(Or, as they reckoned by the score,  
They roundly added some pounds more.)  
"Where's now his neck ? where's now his back ?  
"His coat hangs on him like a sack,  
"Legs, arms, used well to fill his clothes,

“He can’t last long” they took their oaths—  
Said one—“he’s not a month to live :”  
Another—“three he may survive,  
“He’s going, no mistake, down hill,  
“But burly frames take time to kill.”  
The country doctors, and the town,  
Men of incredible renown,  
Consulted, sapient and grave,  
Most various opinions gave,  
With voices very antiphonic  
Ordered, disordered every tonic ;  
“Gouty with too much wine in youth,”  
“Dyspeptic ”—“both, alas ! in truth,”  
Said this, said that ; some disagreed,  
Some coincided, but with speed  
Added a melancholy score  
Of trifling complications more,  
Till wiser one, with less pretence  
In his majestic common-sense,  
Cried briefly, brusquely, quaint and odd,

"To Norway with your fishing-rod.

"Back in two months, fit to endure

"Herculean toils, but change your cure,

"Get Turniptop well off the brain,

"Then, fresh as boy, begin again."

So settled that laconic leech

With faith and healing in his speech.

Dash went to Norway, Dash returned

Cured, and with holy ardour burned,

And gratitude for favour given

To serve his church, and merit heaven,

He cared not where, but promptly, when

He'd just seen the old haunts again,

And to "the rude forefathers" there

Said "farewell," and bequeathed his prayer;

So packed his goods, and packed his chattels,

No more with Guano, Bobbin battles,

But with his wife and daughters twain

Outstretched from the departing train,

Whirls off to town, to seek and find

A sphere congenial to his mind,  
Still in his memory keeping green  
Life's links, and that last parting scene.

Sometimes in church, sometimes in state,  
Blind fortune rules, books have their fate ;  
But observation bids me say  
That mostly 'tis the other way ;  
These, faint and timid, curse their luck,  
Those p prefix, and win by pluck ;  
And Dash, a vigorous man again,  
Was of the latter sort 'tis plain ;  
Not his with folded hands to rust,  
Exert himself he clearly must,  
So bustled busily about  
Among church agents in and out,  
Preached here, preached there, preached every-  
where,  
Helped to unite some noble pair ;  
Who needed, too, on him could count  
To aid at altar, or at font ;

In truth, prospecting for advance,  
He kept himself en évidence,  
And, as a useful man, his name  
Acquired a serviceable fame,  
Enhanced, when with his high degree,  
"The Reverend A. D. Dash, D.D.,"  
From Oxford back with fresh renown  
Surplice and hood he showed in town,  
And rumour of promotion ran  
With whisper of the coming man ;  
'Tis certain, too, the premier's eye  
Surveyed the doctor pleasantly.  
It is in truth a curious fact  
How things concomitantly act.  
(Pray on this head read Mr Mill,  
I'll not myself inflict the pill.)  
For now two matters happened, which,  
They say, secured our friend his niche :  
The first was this, he had outgrown  
His Whiggish garments, and was known



As one extreme, and, to be brief,  
The follower of a grand old chief ;  
What caused the change I don't inquire,  
Maybe the state of Turnipshire,  
Or Gladstone's glamour, and the need  
Of an authoritative lead,  
I know not, but to this I'll sign  
My name, the change was genuine ;  
And, as no milksop nature his,  
If politics turned up, he'd fizz,  
He'd pounce upon you in the street,  
Or station, if you chanced to meet,  
And reassert, almost a bore,  
"I'm radical, and to the core,  
"No half and half for me, my friend,  
"I'm rad., and to the bitter end."  
Few cared the stormy man defy  
With light of battle in his eye,  
But swallowed all he said in lump,  
Tip-tilting nose, and let him stump.

His views did strangely coincide  
With what was then the flowing tide,  
And some cried "opportunist," worse—  
Some "turncoat," giving chapter, verse ;  
But I absolve him of the charge,  
And stainless from the court enlarge.  
What happened next was, that his view  
Of things religious altered too ;  
He cast aside his rural skin,  
And for the newer lights went in.  
(Mixed metaphor, and vulgar phrase,  
But each helps each, and sense conveys.)  
And what maybe was first a fashion  
Fermented in him to a passion,  
So highly strung and so acute,  
Keen, as was said before, like Brute.  
To trace the windings of the heart  
In such a puzzle beats my art,  
And often, when all's said and done,  
We end as wise as we begun ;

Maybe the larger air of town,  
Mixing with men of rare renown,  
The counsels of some great divine  
His heart did otherwise incline,  
Contrasts of life, rustic, urbane,  
Made him revolve all thoughts again  
To newer moulds—then, too, I think,  
His woman-kind that way did wink,  
For they, too, followed fashion's hour,  
Who can resist her subtle power ?  
Last came the premier's flattering note,  
Which Dash could not forbear to quote,  
Keeping the postcard all his days,  
“ ‘Laudari a laudato,’ gaze !  
“ Of thee too long I've been in search,  
“ The very man for such a church,  
“ Haste to Plutocapnopolis,  
“ Fine field there for thy labours is,  
“ Whonamed thee were our common friends,  
“ My wife to thine her greeting sends.”

Thus, launched on fortune's fullest flood,  
Dash went in ritualistic mood,  
And moving once, moved altogether,  
Just like the cloud in Wordsworth's weather,  
And perhaps, as he increased in power,  
Loved it the more (we like to tower).  
But here's the end : all has been said,  
'Tis out what tale was in my head—  
Let who will recapitulate,  
Finis—prolixity I hate.

One moment yet attend me still,  
For moralise thus much I will,  
How strange life's scenes before us pass,  
Is't all a dream of laughing gas?  
Or mixed with pathos and with tears  
This medley stage of hopes and fears?  
And by our side in every age  
The smiling and the weeping sage?  
He, only he, who held mankind  
Ringed in the hollow of his mind,

Lord of the universal heart,  
Reflected truth from every part,  
And back from worlds of gloom and wreck,  
Summoned at his magnetic beck,  
Showed us his fairies and his flowers,  
And pure Miranda's crystal bowers,  
Shakespeare world-wide—still lesser men  
Wield not an unimportant pen.  
Shade of Erasmus ! thine to tell  
Folly's quaint tricks in hall and cell,  
Pouring that bull's-eye lamp of wit  
With the sly laughter following it :  
Hail Pascal too ! born foe to kill  
Jesuitic lies with piercing quill :  
Thee, third of the triumvirate,  
Not least, arch Moliere, whose hate  
Through laughter routing cant from France  
Hit Tartuffe full with levelled lance.

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Does any disbelieve our story ?  
'Tis true as gospel I assure ye,  
Nor on that basis it relies  
Of must-be impossibilities,  
“Credo, quia impossibile,”  
Who said that, a Jesuit Sibyl he—  
But we have drawn from life our strokes,  
Like Garrick, between tears and jokes.

## POSTSCRIPT

WHAT shadows are we ! (Burke, how true).  
And oh ! what shadows we pursue !  
Dash is defunct ! ah me ! the shock  
Would agitate a heart of rock,  
“Of sudden serous apoplexy,”  
Words fail me, but, I know, 'twill vex ye :  
Strange irony ! and we have seen  
What his saint's progress might have been ;  
Gone like Trim's hat—peace to his soul,  
For far worse men the bell will toll.  
Audite tristem turris sonum,  
“De mortuis nil nisi bonum.”

## NOTES

*A few notes are appended mainly to explain allusions to less instructed readers. Scholars can skip.*

- P. 4. "Augurs."—The Roman Augurs who held the auspices before all important events, had so got to disbelieve in their profession, that they are said, on meeting, to have laughed in each others' faces.
- P. 7. "Trismegistus" (unspeakably great) was the name destined by Mr Shandy for his new-born son. By a mistake he was unfortunately christened Tristram, to the great chagrin of Mr Shandy.
- P. 8. "Archidiaconally."—The Archdeacon helps at the installation of every new incumbent to his parish.
- P. 11. "Timeo Danaos" (Virgil).—I dread the Greeks even when they offer gifts. "Rusticus expectat" (Horace).—The clown thinks the river will run dry, so that he can cross over. "The middle course, etc." translated from Ovid. These are three stock quotations, on which elderly gentlemen, with a tincture of classics, sometimes trade a good deal.



- P. 14. "Mark Brute."—Marcus Brutus, of whom Caesar said, "Whatever he wills, he wills in earnest."
- P. 15. "Comet port."—Clearly of the famous comet year, 1811, very perfect from 1850 to 1860.
- P. 17. "Talleyrand."—To a young man who did not know whist; he is stated to have said, "What a sad old age you are preparing for yourself."
- P. 19. "Walpole and Windham."—Sir Robert Walpole, the Premier, and William Windham, the fond adherent of Burke.
- "Melbourne's sloth."—"Can't we leave things alone" was a favourite expression of Lord Melbourne.
- P. 20. "Col. Sibthorp and Sir Robert Inglis."—Two "stern unbending" Tories about the middle of the century.
- P. 23. "Flaccus."—Horace's third name. Squire Double alludes to the beginning of a famous Ode of his, in which he celebrates the firmness of one not awed by either a tyrant or the mob.
- P. 36. "Anuphaton."—Unwoven. "Akreophagy."—Not eating flesh.
- P. 37. "Arma virumque."—The man and his exploits. (Virgil).
- P. 42. "M.B. pattern."—A peculiar kind of waistcoat, much affected by extreme high-churchmen, variously interpreted.
- P. 44. "Knot."—In Greek tragedies, when the situation became very complicated, a God intervened

to cut the knot. Similarly the chorus explained difficulties, and moralised on the events of the drama.

- P. 45. "De Augmentis," and "Novum Organum," two of Lord Bacon's most celebrated works.
- P. 51. "The image of his face."—Alluding to the legend of St Veronica, and the face of Christ appearing on her handkerchief.
- P. 73. "For at fifteen, etc."—Words actually heard by me, only that I have substituted "youngsters" for "devils."
- P. 76. "Golden Rose."—The most coveted gift of the Pope, generally presented to those of imperial or regal birth, and of most orthodox faith.
- P. 77. "Urbi et orbi."—Addressed to the city (Rome) and to the world.  
 "Sede gestatoriâ."—The chair of state, on which the Pope is borne to say High Mass at St Peter's.
- P. 91. "Hellebore."—A medicine for madness, referred to by Horace and others.
- P. 98. "Odourless."—The Emperor Vespasian imposed a peculiar tax, of an odorous character. Taunted about it, he said, "Anyhow, the money has no smell."
- P. 119. "Laudari a laudato,"—to receive praise from one of established renown.
- P. 122. "Credo, etc."—I believe, because it is impossible the thing could have been invented.

P. 123. "Burke."—He made the remark, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!"

P. 123. "Saint's progress."—There are many progresses. The ancients have familiarised us with the "Despot's," Bunyan with the "Pilgrim's," Hogarth with "the Rake's," and his abandoned Sister's.

"Trim's hat."—When Mr Shandy's eldest boy died in London, Corporal Trim announced the fact to the assembled servants in the kitchen; and, in order to convey the idea of sudden mortality, all at once dropped his hat on the floor with great effect, a dramatic stroke, on which Sterne dilates with his usual subtlety.





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